

Soldiers of the Cross

Making Disciples of all Nations Matt 28:19-20

Issue 1

Fighting the Good Fight Part 1

What does it mean to be a Soldier of the Cross? To answer that, let's take a look at what it means to be a soldier in a regular army.

By Leah Knowing

A soldier has one purpose in life, whether peace-time or war-time. And that is to obey his Commanding Officer.

In a war, the normal soldier doesn't see the big picture of who's winning the war. In fact, they don't generally know anything except what they are told, when they need to know. Most of the time, I guess to protect the army against possible leaks, soldiers aren't even told where they are going or what they will do, until it becomes absolutely necessary.

In Basic Training or 'Boot Camp', as it is called in some countries, soldiers are trained to work together as a unit. If you don't do your job, then someone could get killed, including you. They learn about their weapons, how to use them and how not to. They learn about the enemy and his tactics and how best to combat them.

"A soldier has one purpose - to obey his Commanding Officer."

They learn about themselves and their own weaknesses and how to make them into strengths. They learn discipline of mind and body. But above all, they learn to obey, obey, obey.

Obedience to orders is probably the biggest tell-tale sign between who is going to make it as a good soldier and who isn't; who you would want in your unit and who you'd prefer was transferred because they would be a danger to you all.

And in the army, obedience to a command by a Commanding Officer isn't dependent

on whether you know all the details or even whether you agree with the command. You just do it because you are told to and trust that those in charge know what they are doing.



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So how does all this relate to us as Christians? Well, I trust you can already see the parallel.

The Bible talks about us being a soldier and in a war, whether we like it or not - there are no 'exercises' or pretend wars, we are in a very real war with a very real enemy from the moment we are saved.

And *our* enemy, is not just of the body, but of the soul and spirit - the enemy around us, (the world), within us (the flesh) and the enemy of our soul (the devil).

We are told to warn those in enemy territory and 'snatch others from the fire and save them' (Jude 23). In fact, Jesus called it our 'Great Commission' (Matt 28:19-20). To preach the Gospel to the lost, and rescue them from 'the wrath to come'.

However, in all of this, we are not alone. Jesus has given us the Holy Spirit to be with us always, so that as we listen to Him, He will tell us what we are to do and even help us to do it (John 16:13).

The Bible also tells us that we have weapons of warfare, which are '*not carnal, but are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds*' (2 Cor 10:4) and that we should '*put on the full armour of God*' and '*stand your ground ... and take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one ... and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*' (Eph 6:11-17). Prayer and praise are also used as weapons.

However, the Bible, and in particular Jesus, also frequently talked about obedience to His commands. Something which many of us would prefer to ignore. He said in more than one place, '*if you love me you will obey my commands*' and '*whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me*' (John 14:15, 21).

And whilst He is *our* Commanding Officer, He himself was no stranger to obedience. He said '*I only do those things I see my Father doing*', '*I always do what pleases Him*', and '*I do exactly what my Father has commanded me*' (Jn 5:19, 8:29, 14:31).

The Bible even talks about 'Boot Camp', which is the church, where we are told to make disciples and teach them to obey everything that Jesus has commanded.

"The Bible even talks about 'Boot Camp', which is the church."

The Apostle Paul encourages us to '*fight the good fight*' (1 Tim 6:12) and '*endure hardship as a good soldier of Christ*' (2 Tim 2:3-4).

(Continued on page 2)

message
of the
moment



Hell's Best Kept Secret
By Ray Comfort

See **Page 3** for a review of
this excellent message

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Fighting the Good Fight

(Continued from page 1)

Unfortunately for a long time, much of the church haven't seen themselves as soldiers in Basic Training and many seem to forget or try to ignore the fact that we as Christians are in a war. But as I said earlier, in a real army, if everyone doesn't do their job, someone could get killed.

In wars, people get injured and some even killed. However, the war goes on and dedicated soldiers will continue fighting injured just so they can inflict damage on the enemy. Unfortunately, much of today's church

has become more of a hospital for the walking wounded or at the other extreme seem oblivious to the war and carry on like it is peace-time and they just want to party.

Now don't get me wrong here. We do need to help get the injured back on their feet and even to have a time of refreshing. But they should be just to aid the cause of Christ, not the purpose of the church in itself.

Fellow Christian, we are in a war which, Praise God for us, has already been won through Christ on the cross. But just like Joshua, Moses and all the great Heroes of

the Faith from the past, we still have to go and take the land.

If we don't do our part in the body, 'as every joint and ligament supplies' (Eph 4:16), then the enemy gains territory and someone falls, gets injured or even gets killed.

Jesus told us to take up our cross daily and follow Him (Lk 9:23) and to 'go, therefore, and make disciples' (Matt 28:19) and to love God and one another (Matt 22:37-40). These are His commands.

With these things in mind, are **you** fighting the good fight? Are **you** a Soldier of the Cross?

The Commission

"...for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it — lest you even be found to fight against God." Acts 5:38,39 (NKJ)

By Tim Knowling

Such wisdom as was spoken by a Pharisee named Gamaliel to the Sanhedrin concerning what to do with the Apostles.

It was in the beginning of 2003 when as a member of my church that we were in the process of planning to host a tent evangelism ministry to our town, that the Holy Spirit impressed upon me these words. It was that same ministry, The Tent of Promise (TOP), that the Lord was to call me to serve in for the next five years.

Over those years, the Lord has brought back to my remembrance many times this passage of scripture, as a word to stand upon or an encouragement during trials, and also when I have been in prayer concerning something I believed the Lord was telling us to do.

"The next two years were to prove a time of great challenges."

Leah and I both joined the TOP separately, Leah some nine months before me. We were married a little over a year later, after both sensing that God had a greater purpose than what we realised at that time, in bringing us together. In our first year of marriage we travelled right around the nation putting up the Tent in a different town each week.

In 2005 we spent three weeks in Uganda and Kenya aside from the Tent crusades back home. In September of that year, after recognising the call of God on our lives, we were both ordained as Pastors and prepared to take over the leadership of the TOP on the road, as Pastors Barry and Sandra Cunningham (our Senior Ministers and founders of The Tent of Promise) planted the church and ministry base for

the TOP, the Promise Faith Centre Church.

The next two years were to prove a time of great challenges and many trials that we had to walk through, but in it all we came out on the other side having grown much in wisdom and grace. In April 2006, our son, Samuel, was born. At the end of 2006, during our yearly Christmas-break, we spent much time seeking God for the new year. What was the message He wanted to speak through us? I had also been seeking the Lord as to what we needed to do to see an increase in the work of evangelism.

A lot of evangelism-based ministries place importance on decisions, with the number of decisions determining fruitfulness. Ps Barry often warned team members against rushing people into making a decision. However, we felt the Lord was now stirring within us a greater need for repentance and for people to bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance (Matt 3:8). So we started the new year with a fresh zeal and a sense that we needed to take a new look at the way we went about preaching the gospel and bringing people into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

In the Tent, our night-time meetings were more focused towards the church and it was here that we started imparting what the Lord had put on our hearts - a desire to reach the lost effectively and encouraging others to do the same. We, the church, have been given a commission to go into the world and make disciples and to teach them to obey everything that the Lord has commanded us (Matt 28:19,20). So our



main ministry focus for the year was to see the church trained and equipped to do this work of evangelism.

However, our concern proved to be true - that most people in the church felt ill-equipped to do the work of evangelising the lost and henceforth, this work was being greatly neglected. What would happen to those who weren't being reached, if they died? Many Christians answer something like 'they would be separated from God' or 'not in heaven', almost hesitating to mention hell. But the Apostle Paul said, 'knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men' (2 Cor. 5:11). Unless we have a concern for where the lost will spend eternity we will remain apathetic towards reaching them.

At the beginning of 2007 we had both sensed a change taking place within us and our place in the ministry and as time passed the Lord worked in us a desire to see the church mobilised as the great army of God it is meant to be. But how could we achieve this? We needed the Lord to speak to us and give us the strategy.

(Continued on page 3)

The Commission

(Continued from page 2)

We had both been blessed during our time in the TOP and had learnt so much under the leadership of Ps Barry and Sandra Cunningham. We were also aware that what God was calling us to would require much grace. I'd heard someone say once that 'if you think you can do it, it's probably not of God'. I realise now they were trying to convey that when something seems impossible we will need to rely on God for the strength to do it.

In a town we ministered in, an older lady came and spoke with us about how she had this desire to share her faith with others but by her own admission felt totally inadequate. This lady spent a couple of weeks with us, which enabled us to be able to impart what we had learnt in one on one evangelism. We knew that there would be many more people like this in churches across this nation whom the Lord would send us to.

"This was something we had made a lifetime commitment to."

Many people would have assumed that after five years of constantly being on the road, that we would want to stop and settle down. But we knew what God had called us to and that even though the vessel might change, our commitment to the Gospel was just as strong if not stronger. This was something that we had made a lifetime commitment to.

At this stage we hadn't spoken with our Senior Pastors, but the time came when we were able to share with them all that God had put on our hearts to do. Sure, we didn't see the whole picture yet, but we knew that God had led us to this place thus far. His promise, that He would complete the work that he had started in us, was assurance enough.

We continued to lead the TOP team throughout that year. We had determined that we would finish our commitments to Ps Barry and Sandra and the Tent.

When Leah and I were in the TOP, Ps Barry had told us of how he and Ps Sandra were sent out from their local assembly to fulfil the vision God had given them. We decided that we wanted to do the same.

We finished our commitment with the Tent of Promise in January 2008, where after being prayed for and blessed, were sent out, and have been residing in Rockhampton, QLD, preparing for the Lord to thrust us out into the harvest field.

This newsletter is to introduce the ministry we believe the Lord has birthed in us and to give a greater awareness of evangelism.

Hell's Best Kept Secret

As the cover to this message says, 'This is not a teaching about the subject of hell.' We first heard this message back in 2005 and were very challenged to say the least. With everything, we need to be like the Bereans who, "searched the scriptures daily to see if those things were so." (Acts 17: 11)

Some of the subjects covered by Ray Comfort are, why do 80-90% of people who make decisions for Christ fall away (backslide) from the faith? Discover a

'Key' which has been forgotten by most of the church, but was used not only by Jesus, but also by the Apostle Paul, George Whitfield and Charles Spurgeon.

David Wilkerson who pioneered Teen Challenge had this to say, "You will want to play and replay this message until you understand it."

Ray Comfort's ministry has received commendations from Franklin Graham, Chuck Missler and many other Christian leaders.

Basic Training Course

Over the last couple of years we have personally heard, tested and used the evangelism teaching of The Way of the Master ministry, founded by Ray Comfort and Kirk Cameron, and have found it to be a very biblical and effective way of reaching the lost for Christ.

This teaching is based on addressing a sinner's conscience, rather than their intellect. The Bible says our 'conscience bears witness' (Rom 2:15) and that the law is written on our hearts and in our minds, so that when we sin we do so with knowledge that it's wrong.

Time and again, as we have witnessed to the lost, we have found that many people believe they will go to Heaven when they die, and that their basis for this, is that they are good person, have done good

deeds and so believe God will let them in. By using God's Law it awakens a sinner's conscience to bring the knowledge of sin and its consequences, and leaves them guilty before a Holy God (Rom 3:19-20). Thus, the Good News becomes good news indeed - that Jesus Christ, God Himself, came to take our punishment of sin (death and hell) on Himself, so that all who repent and believe in Him will have eternal life.

Recently we facilitated a WOTM 'Basic Training Course' as part of what we believe God has called us to, in seeing the church trained and equipped for evangelism. It was very challenging, as the Lord renewed people's minds. But the results were very rewarding. Below are some testimonies from those who participated.

Testimonies

I have just finished 'The Way of the Master' 8 week course. It was an extremely good training course on evangelism. I felt challenged every week, but not condemned. They were very confronting sessions but also encouraging at the same time. They made you want to get out there and tell someone about their great need for Jesus.

I like the way Ray Comfort presents this study, with many interesting stories, the use of quotes from prominent preachers, and the very strong biblical base he uses. One may call what he teaches an old but forgotten Godly fact. The DVD's are well presented and give excellent examples of what to do and what not to do to bring a person to the proper knowledge of Jesus Christ. I was very inspired by this course, like never before and now have what I would call a much deeper understanding of evangelism.

Pastor Tony Ponicke
(Course Participant)
Peace Apostolic Community

Until I completed the course "Way of the Master" I was very fearful of confronting people to share my faith. I used to ask the Lord to bring someone to me if I was to witness to them. Now I know I have to go to them. It has totally changed my thinking and has helped me to overcome my fears.

At the end of the course we went on a "fishing trip" (for lost souls). It was a bit frightening but when I stepped out and talked to some girls everything I had learned came to me and it was so exciting to be able to witness and be confident. I am very grateful for the teaching I have received and I thank Ps Tim and Leah for their commitment in bringing us this course. Everyone needs to be equipped to share the message and see lives changed.

Shirley Fisher
(Course Participant)
Peace Apostolic Community

Basic Training Course Testimonies (cont'd)

I sincerely commend "The Way of the Master" course by Kirk Cameron & Ray Comfort to all believers who desire to fulfil the Great Commission and share the message of salvation. I had always been held back by fears and a lukewarmness towards the lost. I am very grateful to Pastors Tim and Leah, our course facilitators, for encouraging us and keeping us focused

throughout each session and for also sharing valuable and helpful insights from their own witnessing. I am inspired and encouraged to witness in a way I never thought was possible.

During the course I was very challenged by Ray and Kirk, but as I completed the activities each time with much prayer, I was better equipped to witness and more confident. Recently I spoke with a young German woman compelled by the thought of her going to hell. For a long time I was

very burdened for my elderly neighbour's salvation. Recently I witnessed to him – something I hadn't previously done successfully. I have also found I have an increased understanding of passages of scripture in Romans concerning the place of the Law in our faith. This course has both enabled and motivated me to witness effectively and biblically.

Patricia Bosel (Course Participant)
Peace Apostolic Community

Unconditional Surrender

In 1945, as WW2 was coming to an end after many years of bloodshed, the German and Japanese governments were given an ultimatum - Unconditional surrender. In other words they would have to accept the terms of the Allied forces.

It is all a matter of history now, with many enduring images such as the signing of the Japanese surrender aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay, as the final act of ending a war which claimed so many lives.

There is, however, a war that has been waged for a lot longer and with it many more casualties.

Each day, around this world approximately 150,000 people die and the war that is being fought is over the eternal destiny of each soul.

We know that 2,000 years ago the Lord Jesus Christ defeated death at the cross and so if we are a believer we can say with the Apostle Paul, *"O death where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"* (1 Cor 15:55)

But what of those who are still outside God's Kingdom?

The Bible says of un-regenerate man that He is at enmity with God. *"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."* (Romans 8:7)

James also warned that *"friendship with the world is enmity with God"*. (Jms 4:4)

And in Colossians 1:21, Paul said they are, *"enemies in their minds by wicked works"*.

It is clear, that to even think about approaching God, it will have to be on His terms.

What are His terms?

The Lord Commands us to repent (Acts 17:30,31) and with real repentance will follow fruit. A complete 180° turnaround; our new nature will abhor the life that we once lived in the flesh.

"Paul preached repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."

Paul preached repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21).

As I have ministered across this nation I have met many people who know that Jesus is the Saviour, that it is through Him and Him only that we may be saved and yet they have not come into saving relationship with Him. Of course the scriptures do tell us that even the demons believe and tremble (Jms 2:19).

What does it mean to believe?

I like the parachute analogy. If you know that you are going to have to jump 10,000 feet out of an aeroplane then you'll not

only believe in a parachute but you will put it on and trust that it will save you. Likewise the Bible tells us to put on the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 13:14). Which brings me to the next point.

I believe that a great mistake many are making and have made is that of separating the Lordship of Christ from him as the Saviour. This was my own folly and I can almost hear myself saying that 'I'll accept Christ as my Saviour as long as I'm in control.' I like what AW Tozer said, 'Apart from the Lordship of Christ there is no Saviour-hood'.

We say, 'Okay, you can have access to the lounge, the kitchen and the bathroom, but you can't go into the bedroom or the backroom'.

If He can't control all of you, He cannot save you.

The fruit of a person completely surrendered to Christ will be evident in his or her life – every part of their life will be affected.

When I surrendered to Christ as Lord of my life, He had someone ready to be moulded into the soldier of the Cross He wanted me to be.

We are all called to the ministry of reconciliation and that is the purpose of this ministry—to equip the church with tools to fulfil the Great Commission.

By Tim Knowling

The Way of the Master

BASIC TRAINING COURSE

**Who do you know who isn't saved?
Where will they go if they die without Christ?**

Discover The Way of the Master.

Your life will never be the same.

'Soldiers of the Cross', founded by Tim and Leah Knowling, is dedicated to 'seeing the church become the mighty, mature and fully-functioning army of God it is meant to be, in a war that has already been won through Christ's atoning death and resurrection, and as Soldiers of the Cross, for us all to be about the Father's business in both evangelising the lost and discipling the saved.'

Pastors Tim and Leah Knowling are affiliated with the International Communion of Charismatic Churches (Aust) Inc.

All articles are written by Tim and Leah, unless otherwise stated. Scripture references taken from the KJV, NKJV, NIV or AMP Bibles.

For more information on this ministry, please contact us.

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